

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are hereby requested. Initially, it is noted that by this amendment, claims 21-28 and 30-34 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter contained therein, and claims 36-47 are added. Thus, claims 29 and 35-47 are now pending in the application.

The minor amendment to the specification hereinabove corrects a typographical error in the text. No new matter has been added.

In items 2-3 on page 2 of the Office Action, claims 21, 22, 24-27 and 32-35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by McKenney (US 4,378,614). The rejection of claims 21, 22, 24-27 and 32-34 is believed moot in view of the cancellation of these claims. Furthermore, the rejection is believed inapplicable to new claims 36-47 for the reasons hereinbelow. The rejection of claim 35 is respectfully traversed hereinbelow.

In items 4-5 on pages 2-3 of the Office Action, claim 28 is rejected as unpatentable over McKenney. This rejection is now believed moot in view of the cancellation of claim 28.

In items 6-7 on page 3 of the Office Action, claims 23, 30 and 31 (corresponding to new claims 37, 43 and 44) and claim 29 are indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter.

Claim 35 recites a harness arrangement suitable for use on water craft, the harness arrangement comprising: a basic element; a means for connecting the basic element to a harness adapted to be used on water craft; wherein the basic element comprises a first piece which comprises the means for connecting the basic element to a harness, and a second piece that can be disconnected from the first piece; a hook, suitable for hooking a cable of the water craft, the hook fixed with respect to the second piece; and a removable coupling member operable to couple the first piece to the second piece that is removable from the first piece and the second piece to uncouple the two pieces. The removable coupling member has a manual grip for removal control.

McKenney does not teach or suggest this combination of features. In contrast to the present invention as recited in claim 35, the hook 6 is *not fixed* with respect to the flat

leaf spring 8 (*i.e.*, the second piece as indicated by the Examiner). Furthermore, if the hook 6 were fixed with respect to the flat leaf spring, the automatic-release hook would not function. This ability for the hook 6 to move relative to the flat leaf spring 8 is fundamental to the design of McKenney.

Further, the flat leaf spring 8 (*i.e.*, second piece) is attached to the base plate 5 (*i.e.*, first piece, as indicated by the Examiner) with a screw or rivet (see column 2, lines 29-30 of the specification). The adjusting nut 9 and screw 91 (*i.e.*, coupling member, as indicated by the Examiner) are for increasing or decreasing the preload on the flat leaf spring 8 (see column 2, lines 31-34 of the specification), and are not operable to uncouple the second piece from the first piece, as recited in claim 35. The first and second piece of McKenney *cannot* be separated manually. The screw 82 depicted in Figures 1-4 could not be removed by hand, and there is no indication in the specification that the screw may comprise a means to manually remove it. If the connector is a rivet, an alternative suggested in the specification, it cannot be removed at all. Neither is there separation of the first piece from the second piece during normal operation of the automatic-release hook of McKenney; the cable 7 is merely released by the hook 6 when a sufficient force has caused the hook 6 to rotate about pivot pin 61. Thus, McKenney does not anticipate the present invention as recited in claim 35.

Claim 39 recites a harness of claim 35, wherein the coupling member comprises a pin that can be slid out of the through hole. Claim 40 depends from claim 39 and further recites that the pin of the coupling member has a handle for sliding the pin out of the through hole.

McKenney does not teach or suggest this combination of features. The screw 91 (*i.e.*, pin) cannot be slid out of the through hole; it is retained at least by the adjusting nut 9 (in combination with the head of screw 91). The adjusting nut 9 (*i.e.*, handle) is not for sliding the screw 91 from the through hole; in fact, it *prevents* the screw from sliding out of the through hole. Thus, McKenney does not anticipate the present invention as recited in claims 39 and 40.

Claim 41 recites the harness of claim 38 (claim 38 recites the harness of claim 35 wherein the first piece and the second piece have a transverse through hole in which the coupling member can be inserted), further comprising a guide track for sliding the pin out

of the through hole. McKenney does not teach or suggest this combination of features. It does not appear that there is *any* feature described in the specification or illustrated in the drawings that could be interpreted as a guide track for sliding the pin out of the through hole. Thus, McKenney does not anticipate the present invention as recited in claim 41. Applicants request that in the future the Examiner identify features in the prior art specifically when making a rejection so that Applicants may respond more completely to the rejection.

Claim 45 recites the harness of claim 35, wherein the second piece comprises a hook. McKenney does not teach or suggest this combination of features. The flat leaf spring 8 (*i.e.*, second piece) does not comprise hook 6; hook 6 is clearly a separate piece. Thus, McKenney does not anticipate the present invention as recited in claim 45.


Moreover, it is respectfully submitted that the above-mentioned differences are such that the prior art of record provides no teaching, suggestion or motivation that would result in or otherwise render obvious the present invention as recited in claim 35 to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 35, as well as claims 36-47 depending therefrom, are clearly allowable over the prior art of record. Claim 29 has previously been indicated by the Examiner as allowable over the prior art of record.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is clearly in condition for allowance. An early notice thereof is earnestly solicited.

If, after reviewing the Amendment, the Examiner feels there are any issues remaining which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned by telephone in order to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Giuseppe PERALE et al.

By:  Reg. No. 33145/02

Aldo A. D'Ottavio
Registration No. 59,559
Agent for Applicants

AAD/NEP/krq
Washington, D.C. 20006-1021
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
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